

VALORIZATION TO CONSERVE RUBBER TREES OF BRAZIL

Government Finds That Industry Must Be Treated Like Coffee Business in Order to Insure Stability in Future—O. P. Sperber Finds That Product Must Always Be Taken From Jungle—Says Plantations Will Never Be a Success

The lay mind coffee valorization means roughly a paternalistic measure by which Brazil enables her coffee merchants to keep prices on regardless of the annual yield. The coffee industry has brought forth many countries, and in particular the United States, Brazil is now adopting the same means to foster the rubber industry.

The rubber problem is quite different from the coffee problem, though both probably can be solved in the same way. Its solution cannot fail to interest the American public, for the United States is the largest buyer of Brazilian rubber.

It may seem a strange at first glance that Brazilian rubber merchants having at their disposal a practically inexhaustible

supply of raw material for which they receive a very high price, should apply to their Government for financial help. It is quite impossible for those who haven't

travelled through the tropical forests of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and

Venezuela to realize what untold wealth lies hidden in the jungle in the shape of wild rubber trees.

Many of the regions I visited, however, not only are uncharted but had never before been trod by the foot of a civilized white man. Roads are out of the question in the tropical marshes where rubber trees grow and rivers constitute the only means of communication. Furthermore climatic conditions are such that the gathering of rubber cannot be done except by the jungle Indian. The damp heat of the virgin forest is deadly to any other human.

All attempts at employing Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese or Japanese laborers in those regions have proved a dismal failure. The slightest physical exertion means fever, physical collapse and death.

The native Indians start in their small boats from the trading posts and paddle along sometimes for a whole month until they locate the 'gomales.' As it is an arduous task and a pretty dangerous one too to creep far into the jungle, the only trees that are ever tapped are those located directly on the banks of navigable streams. Enormous areas between parallel rivers remain therefore untouched. Before starting on his expedition up stream the native draws a considerable advance on what-ever rubber he may bring back in the shape of supplies, clothing, tools, etc., and then he may not come back for several months.

It is quite expensive, as you see, to fit out all those men before they leave the trading post. To be sure they pay outrageous prices for the supplies advanced to them, but it costs the rubber merchants a pretty penny to maintain trading posts, to ship supplies and store them up. The more rubber tappers a merchant employs the more ready cash he must advance. The Indians have to be fed not only while they are gathering rubber, but while they are locating new trees.

The rubber tappers generally start in July and work until the end of September prospecting for new 'gomales.' During those three months rubber trees must not be tapped; it is the time when they shed their leaves and can be easily located to within recent times largely a matter which usually covers them up. At any other time of the year it is a hopeless job to try to distinguish a rubber tree from the rest of the surrounding vegetation.

The rubber tapper makes a notch of special design on every new tree he finds and his brand is always respected by other jungle runners. Every rubber tapper brands between 80 and 150 trees, scattered sometimes over as many acres. This is called an estrade. After branding all the trees the prospector slashes with his tapping cutlass a path through the bush running from tree to tree, which facilitates his work when he returns in the tapping season.

In October he paddles his way back to his estrade and begins the tapping, which lasts until the end of December. The trees are tapped in the early morning and the flow of latex lasts about two hours, after which the wound heals and the tree must be permitted to rest twenty-four hours.

In January, February and March equatorial downpours drown the jungle and make tapping impossible. Operations start anew in April, May and June and then the prospecting season begins.

Rubber is the cream from the juice, the milk, or the latex, of several varieties of tree or shrub. This latex is not the same as the sap, and it runs in different channels and performs different functions. As this latex flows from the cut, it has the appearance of milk and acts much in the same way. If left to itself, the latex separates into a lower fluid and a surface mass, like cream, which is India rubber.

Various ways have been developed or devised for obtaining this rubber from the latex, the process being intrinsically complicated. The aboriginal method seems to have been in Brazil, by smoking heat; elsewhere natural heat is applied or mineral or chemical additions are made to the milk to separate the rubber. Recently the suggestion has been carried into practice of using the separator apparatus so efficient in the dairy industry.

It cannot be doubted but that the coagulation process adopted has a noticeable influence on the character and market price of crude rubber, although the kind of tree from which the latex flows, as well as the soil in which it grows, are substantial factors in the result. Having been up to within recent times largely a matter of native habit, left altogether in unscientific hands by the buyers of rubber the coagulation showed remarkable differences, and in some instances has even

impressed a name upon the product; niggerheads, biscuits and so on, are among the terms applied—but the shape of the crude rubber usually indicates the place from which it is shipped. It will take years to uniformize the various native plans adopted for coagulation. Perhaps this will never be accomplished, but on plantations where careful study can be given to the matter it has been determined that heating by smoke produces the cleanest and purest rubber for commercial export.

Rubber is rubber, whether from a tree on the Amazon, in the uplands of Ceara, the mountains of Bolivia, the jungles of Nicaragua, the fastnesses of the Congo, the cultivated plantations of Ceylon or the northern regions of Mexico; the important question is, however, whether the plant has an abundant yield of latex. Therefore the source of supply has been the subject of great study for the botanist ever since the first American discoverers saw the curious balls and bottles of the natives.

At the present day a narrow strip of forest on the banks of the Amazon and its tributaries produces over one half of the world's supply of rubber. There is no doubt in my mind that the basin of the Amazon will remain for ever the main source of rubber supply. As I said before, the rubber forest has hardly been touched as yet. Only successful rubber plantations or the discovery of synthetic rubber could jeopardize the supremacy of the Amazon forest.

The hevea, which is the rubber tree par excellence, cannot grow anywhere else, for it requires a low lying rich, deep soil with such abundant moisture as only equatorial regions can provide. Rubber planting has been tried in many parts of the world and has supplied enterprising promoters with a new scheme for swindling the gullible. Ninety per cent. of the plantations in which so many have invested their savings have been entirely abandoned. In Vera Cruz alone \$10,000,000 was invested in rubber plantations. At the present day the whole planted area is not worth a half million.

Castilloa elastica, which has been planted extensively in Mexico and Central America, requires a rich, deep soil and a moderate amount of moisture. Like all jungle trees it is easily killed by strong winds and direct sunlight. When all the necessary conditions are filled and if this tree does not die before attaining its tenth or twelfth year, it yields about two ounces of rubber, that is thirty-one pounds an acre. A very poor business investment indeed!

Optimists have been trying to acclimatize hevea in the temperate zone. Even if they should succeed, which I doubt, they will have to wait quite some time before gathering an ounce of rubber. My observations in the Amazon forest have convinced me that even under ideal conditions the hevea tree does not begin to give good latex until its fifteenth year. Younger trees even under careful tapping soon become stunted or die.

Finally many hevea trees planted in East India and elsewhere are killed in their fourth year by a parasitic tubercle which attacks their roots. This is why I have absolutely no faith in the future of rubber plantations. The demand for rubber is increasing at the rate of about 25,000,000 pounds a year and it simply means that the Amazon rubber forests will have to be tapped more scientifically and more extensively.

At present rubber gatherers undoubtedly destroy an enormous number of trees in order to gather a more latex at a time and to reap their cash reward a little more speedily. The Brazilian and other Governments interested in the production of rubber are earnestly striving to conserve the forests and rectify the mistakes of the earlier prospectors. What is needed, however, are lines of railroads penetrating the wilderness and lines of motor launches plying on the tributaries of the Amazon and enabling the rubber gatherers to reach rapidly the unexplored regions.

More rubber is needed to develop the rubber gathering industries. Unless prices are guaranteed against an unexpected break it is very difficult for rubber men to find new capital. The Government is then practically compelled to lend a helping hand; it cannot afford, however, to invest public money unless it can control the value of the collateral. And this is the whole secret of the valorization scheme.

Many Brazilians are hostile to the idea. They do not relish the idea of all the available funds being used in the development of one or two cultures. A good deal of land, they say, remains fallow which could be made to produce the staples Brazil needs and buys abroad. And then there is the dread of synthetic rubber, whose discovery would mean absolute ruin for all Para rubber merchants.

The United States, which is the largest buyer of rubber, need not worry unduly over the valorization. It is not likely to increase the production of that commodity and by regulating the financial condition of the rubber trade will confer a distinct benefit on any one having goods to sell for Brazilian consumption.



Rubber Gatherers on the Upper Amazon River.

Tapping a Rubber Tree in Chiapas, Mexico

lateral a part of the rubber crop in

O. P. Sperber, an explorer who has travelled all over rubber lands of South and Central America and is the author of many books and articles on the subject of coffee and rubber, was asked for the details of the so-called valorization scheme and the motives which have prompted the Brazilian legislators to action.

The coffee and the rubber valorization, Mr. Sperber explained, "are not by any means arbitrary measures devised in compliance with the wishes of greedy bankers. The peculiarities of the coffee and rubber trade make this trade comparable to a certain extent to the trade in precious metals. The highly irregular yield of coffee plantations and the costly method, seemingly the only practical one which is followed in the gathering of rubber, make the regulation of prices an absolute necessity.

The bumper crops of the early nineties combined with a steadily growing demand for coffee and the consequent high prices caused many Brazilians to plant an enormous acreage with coffee. In those days coffee sold generally for \$15 a bag, with a tendency to touch now and then the \$25 mark. As soon as the new plantations began to yield prices collapsed and the coffee went down to \$5. When it is borne in mind that Brazil produces four-fifths of the world's supply of coffee, and that one-half of that comes from one single Brazilian State, Sao Paulo, one can imagine the chaotic conditions which obtained in the banking business owing to such an extraordinary rise and fall of prices.

No forecast is possible in coffee culture. There is usually a bumper crop every five or six years, after which the shrub is seemingly exhausted and does not recuperate for several seasons. On the other hand, the records of several bumper crops having followed one another in quick succession.

A private valorization committee tried at first to adjust conditions. Several banks, among others the Diskonto Gesellschaft of Berlin (which alone advanced \$50,000,000) lent to coffee merchants enough money to enable them to keep their share of the market until a scantier yield brought about a rise in prices. The Federal Government took over these various individual loans and guaranteed them by issuing ten-year bonds to the amount of \$200,000,000.

Out of 6,000,000 bags in the storehouses of the valorization board, Le Havre took 1,000,000 bags, New York 1,400,000 and Hamburg 1,400,000.

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CONGRESS OF RELIGIONS MAY MEET IN NEW YORK

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It is probable that the great religious congress which is being planned for the purpose of effecting a worldwide union among Christian churches, and for the purpose of which J. Pierpont Morgan has subscribed \$100,000, will be held in New York.

The Rev. William T. Manning, rector of Trinity Church, who started the movement at the general convention of the Episcopal Church of the United States in Cincinnati in October, 1910, and who has just returned from Europe where he has been in conference with foreign prelates, said the other day that while no definite arrangements have been made as yet regarding the time and place of the congress, there seems to be a general feeling that it should convene in one of the large cities of the United States, and that New York would undoubtedly be the most accessible for the majority of the delegates.

Dr. Manning, Bishop Charles Palmerston Anderson of Chicago, Bishop Boyd Vincent of southern Ohio, chairman of the Episcopal House of Bishops, and Bishop Arthur C. A. Hall of Vermont, who were chosen as special representatives of the special commission appointed at Cincinnati to arrange for a world conference on faith and order, attended several meetings in Lambeth Palace, the official residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Most Rev. Randall T. Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of all England, the Most Rev. Cosmo G. Lang, Archbishop of York, bishops representing the most prominent dioceses in England, and the Bishop of South Africa, were present at all the sessions and manifested the most cordial interest in the proposed undertaking as described to them by the American clergymen.

"Our conferences were most satisfactory from every point of view," said Dr. Manning. "The Archbishop of Canterbury promised to appoint early in the autumn a commission similar to that appointed by the Episcopal Church in America, of twenty-five others representing the Episcopal Church in Canada and various Protestant sects in the United States. We discussed the whole question in as much detail as was possible at the present stage of progress which the movement has reached. My colleagues and I made it very plain to our English brethren that although the Episcopal Church of America had broached the subject of a world conference of Christian churches to the end that there might be a closer bond between them, a widening of sympathy and a lessening of prejudice, we did not wish to assume any authority in the matter of issuing an official call for the congress, nor did we wish to dictate in regard to the time or place of holding the congress. It is our function merely to invite all of the evangelical bodies to appoint commissions to consider plans for such

a congress, and to make them understand fully the motives which govern our action. This movement has unquestionably a deeper significance, continued Dr. Manning, "than any that has occurred in the religious world since the Protestant reformation. In scope and plan it is even larger than that, and in spirit it is diametrically opposed to that which governed the leaders of the revolt from Rome. They were actuated by a desire to put themselves in every possible way as opposed to what they conceived to be errors of faith or practice on the part of the older ecclesiastical organizations and to persuade as many persons as they could to sever their relations with the latter. It is the aim of the instigators of the present movement to emphasize likenesses rather than differences among the various churches which are represented in the congress in the hope that thereby all petty prejudices may be obliterated and an intelligent sympathy be established. It must not be imagined, however, that there is any desire to minimize the vital importance to the members of any communion of the special doctrines which have made it distinctive from other forms of Christian faith. We recognize perfectly also the hesitancy with which many Christians would regard the proposition to participate in a conference involving a number of matters which seem to them to be above dispute, and we are therefore taking the utmost pains to make all of those who are invited to the conference understand that that body will have no power to commit any participating communion on any point. The purpose of the conference is to facilitate study and discussion of the various phases of Christian doctrine as they are set forth by the churches represented, and it will have no power to legislate or to adopt resolutions. Every church will be urged to state fully and clearly the things in their special creeds and forms of worship which they consider essential, in order that from a careful and prayerful consideration of all the matter submitted a sufficient number common beliefs may be found to form a substantial basis of unity.

"In recent years it has become more and more plain to be seen that a disunited Christendom cannot effectually fulfill the will of Christ and achieve the work which was assigned by Him to His church. One of the most evident and one of the saddest consequences of our disunion is its lessening of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues without which whatsoever liveth is counted dead before the Lord. As long as we are disunited, controversy and rivalry will continue, and these things cannot but make charity more difficult and utterances more prevalent. Another more serious consequence of our disunion is the weakening and undermining of religious conviction which results from it. Where so many differing doctrinal positions are maintained, people jump to the conclusion, unjustifiable as it is, that no doctrinal posi-

tion is of serious consequence. Men are rejecting the Church because they are confronted and confused by the churches. Meanwhile the loss of power due to our disunion gives undue advantage to the forces of evil.

"The deepening conviction that the evils referred to cannot be remedied without such reunion between all Christian bodies throughout the world as shall demonstrate our oneness in Christ has caused various efforts to be made and plans to be devised for bringing about such a reunion. But no one of these plans has been able to secure any general approval, and it is becoming increasingly apparent that every effort to secure unity will prove abortive until such measure of mutual understanding and agreement touching questions of faith and order as will enable Christian communities to cooperate without either seeming to compromise or to surrender to the claims of the Roman Church does not acknowledge the authority of the Roman Pontiff, has also given his cordial approval to the plan which was submitted to him by representatives of the commission, and has promised to see that delegates from his church and sent to the general conference. This is the first attempt made by any important body of clergymen to bring about any form of union between the Catholic and the Greek, Arabic and Syrian, the Protestant sects, and it is considered a marked evidence of the gradual deepening of a general spirit of religious toleration that such a project is deemed feasible by the members of either of the two great divisions of Christianity.

Dr. Manning explained that the reason it was still impossible, despite the tremendous enthusiasm exhibited in the proposed plan of union, to fix even approximately a date for the general conference lay in the necessity for extreme delicacy and diplomacy in the matter of approaching the different churches in Europe, Asia and the other continents. The idea of a world union of Christian churches seems upon first presentation to be a simple and straightforward practical to the leaders of any religious organization without a personal interview. Many churches with whom the various commissions have opened communication by letter have replied that they were very much interested in the plan, but that they could not definitely commit themselves to active cooperation until they understood the matter more fully. In order that the project may be carried out with due reference to its inherent dignity and worldwide importance, it is necessary that those who go to foreign countries as representatives of the commissions appointed by the different American churches shall be men of recognized ability and rank.

The representatives of the commission appointed by the Episcopal Church, for instance, included three of the principal Bishops of the United States and the rector of the wealthiest parish in the world. It is obvious that the securing of several hundred similar delegations and the execution of their missions will involve several years' work.

There will of course be numerous preliminary conferences, both denominational and interdenominational, among the churches in America before the arrangements for the general conference are complete. There has as yet been no conference between representatives of the liturgical communions and those who do not favor the use of liturgy. It is probable that one will be held in New York some time during the fall.

The members of the Episcopal commission, of which Bishop Anderson is president, consist of nine Bishops, nine presbyters and eight laymen. J. Pierpont Morgan, Seth Low, Francis L. Stetson and George Zabriskie are among the lay members, who also include George Wharton Pepper of Philadelphia and Robert M. Carpenter of Maine. The members of the clergy appointed are:

The Rt. Rev. C. P. Anderson, D. D., president, Bishop of Chicago.

The Rt. Rev. Boyd Vincent, D. D., Bishop of Southern Ohio.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Gailor, D. D., Bishop of Tennessee.

The Rt. Rev. A. C. Hall, D. D., Bishop of Vermont.

The Rt. Rev. C. B. Brewster, D. D., Bishop of Connecticut.

The Rt. Rev. Reginald H. Weller, D. D., Bishop of Colorado.

The Rt. Rev. Charles H. Brent, D. D., Bishop of the Philippine Islands.

The Rt. Rev. David H. Greer, D. D., Bishop of New York.

The Rt. Rev. F. J. Kinsman, D. D., Bishop of Delaware.

The Rev. William T. Manning, D. D., chairman of committee on plan and scope.

The Rev. Alexander Mann, D. D., Boston, Mass.

The Rev. Francis J. Hall, D. D., Chicago, Ill.

The Rev. E. Talbot Rogers, D. D., Fond du Lac, Wis.

The Rev. William M. Clark, D. D., of Richmond, Va.

The Rev. Edward L. Parsons of Berkeley, Cal.

The Rev. Philip M. Rhineland, D. D., of Philadelphia.

The Rev. Henry S. Nash, D. D., of Cambridge, Mass.

The Rev. A. C. Mortimer, D. D., of Philadelphia.

It has been estimated that the representatives of about 100,000,000 Christians are supporting the movement. Among the church organizations which have already appointed commissions are the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the United Presbyterian Church of North America, the Congregational Church, the Disciples of Christ, the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), the Methodist Episcopal Church (North), the Reformed Church in the United States, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Free Baptist Church, the Reformed Church in America and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.